



The NASA Glenn Research Center Macintosh User Group

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Welcome to another issue of the NASA Mac User Group newsletter. Hopefully everyone had a great summer, and more importantly, remembered to "Fall Back" Saturday night. Love getting that extra hour of sleep!!

I would like to thank everyone who has patiently beta tested the new Microsoft Office 2008 these past few months while waiting for the Agency to approve it. That time is upon us, and shortly you will be contacted for the upgrade.

Leopard (10.5.5) is now in beta testing, so if anyone with an Intel macintosh would like their Tiger systems upgraded to Leopard, please let me know. If you have a PPC macintosh, check with your POC as to when you may expect a refresh and if it's a ways into the future, and you want to be part of the beta group, let me know.

Regularly scheduled upgrades will start to happen mid November. The upgrade takes about 2 hours, and Office 2008 will be installed at the same time.

In the meantime, if you would like to go kick the tires on the new OS and Office, a mac has been set up in the seat eval lab in Bldg 142, room 187.

Apple has released some new hardware, on purpose I am sure, so that it is getting all that much more difficult for me NOT to purchase a new aluminum Macbook and finally unload the old Quicksilver 867 MhZ G4 tower I've had for many years.

Read on as we have some great articles in this edition of the newsletter, and by all means, do not hesitate to send me an article of your own for a future edition!!

—Lisa Madden, *Editor*

The MUG Store: Great Prices, Great Incentives

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Is MobileMe Worth the Money?

*by Claire J Rottenberg
CJRTOOLS ebooks*

If you're not a subscriber to Apple's online service, MobileMe, you might be wondering if the service would be right for you. Or maybe you are a subscriber and you're not sure if you should renew your subscription. In this article, I briefly describe the main MobileMe services so you can decide if the service is worth the cost.

Syncing Feature

Apple has emphasized the syncing capabilities of MobileMe as the central element of the service. The syncing feature of MobileMe is easy to use and can be set to sync your computers and iPhone or iPod Touch to the online MobileMe application. You can sync your email accounts and messages, Address Book contacts, Safari bookmarks, and iCal calendars. Some third party applications may also let you sync data from them. Syncing can be automatic so that every time you make a change on your computer, the change will be automatically synced with the online MobileMe service or, if you prefer, you can manually sync your data by accessing an option from the Mac OS X menu bar. Although syncing does not work quite as quickly or smoothly as Apple first stated it would, it does work well for most setups.

Email Service

The MobileMe package includes an excellent IMAP email service. Although the new email account name (yourname@me.com) is not pleasing to all users, the service has advantages over other email services. I have several email accounts, including a Gmail account, and the MobileMe email service uses spam filtering that is far superior to that of other accounts. Unlike some other accounts that place all spam in a junk mailbox, MobileMe filters out the spam before it ever reaches your mailbox so very little junk mail actually gets to you.

In addition to excellent spam filtering, the MobileMe email service provides you with an enormous amount of storage space so you can keep all of your email messages in one account. Also, since the account is an IMAP account, you can keep your online and offline mailboxes always in sync.

Online Storage

Another benefit of MobileMe is the 20 GB of online storage space that comes with the service. Because your MobileMe iDisk can be mounted on the desktop, you can add photos, music files, videos, and other files to the iDisk just as you would to any hard drive. In addition, the new online interface has an upload option that lets you add files to your iDisk from any computer. Now, with MobileMe, you can have a safe, offsite location for storing your important data.

Web Hosting

A MobileMe account has one more useful feature - a web hosting service with huge bandwidth limits (200 GB per month). Although Apple only advertises its hosting service in combination with Web Galleries and iWeb, you can, in fact, use any web design or development application with MobileMe. Publishing a website to your MobileMe account can be done from within some applications, such as RapidWeaver, or you can simply drag a website folder to either the Sites or Web folder on your iDisk to create an instant, live website. MobileMe's web hosting service doesn't provide all of the special features of most dedicated web hosting services, but it is more than adequate for many users' needs. And the 20 GB of storage space plus the 200 GB of monthly bandwidth make it perfect for photo album sites that you might want to share with your friends or with the world.

Conclusion

Is MobileMe worth the money? If all you want is a syncing program or an email service or a web hosting service, MobileMe is probably not worth the expense. But, if you want or need two or more of the services provided, MobileMe is a good value. For \$99 a year, you get the ability to sync data on all of your computers and your iPhone or iPod Touch, a good email service with excellent spam filtering, an easy-to-use hosting service, and enough offsite storage for your email, websites and important data.

** Note - Since MobileMe is a new service, it still has some bugs in it that Apple is working hard to resolve. For example, while working on this article, my email account on MobileMe became inaccessible for a short period of time. Hopefully, Apple will work out the bugs soon and MobileMe will be the smooth working service Apple has promised users.*

Claire J Rottenberg is the author of Easy Guides to Mac OS X software (Safari, Mail, System Preferences, TextEdit) and Course Books on Mac OS X 10.5, iPhoto '08, iTunes, and Mac OS X 10.4. More information on her books is available on the CJRTOOLS ebooks website <http://www.cjrtools.com/ebooks>.



<http://www.grc.nasa.gov/WWW/AdvisoryGroups/MUG/>

The opinions expressed in this review are those of the author and do not imply the endorsement of NASA.

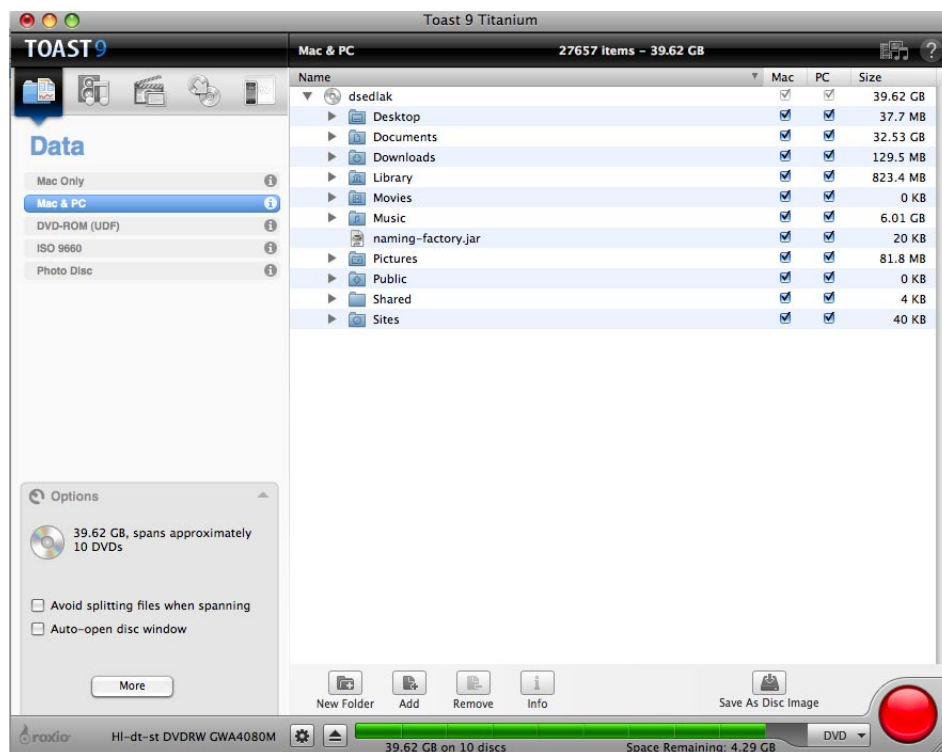
Toast 9 - Not Just Your Average Disc-Burner. Truly a Media Toolkit

By: *Debbi Sedlak*

When I was offered the chance to get Toast 9 for just the price of writing a review, I jumped at the chance. What I didn't realize was just how much I was really getting...this is not just a disc copy program - it is truly a media converter workhorse and toolkit! It sports an easy to use interface and is very intuitive. All you have to do is drag and drop files and then Toast walks you through most functions.

I was mostly interested in the backup capability of the software, so I will go into a bit more detail on that aspect of the software. It is fantastic for doing backups - it has a "span" feature that prompts you to feed it discs during a large data backup session. You don't have to figure out how much will fit on an individual DVD and whether the folder has to be split up or not. I recently used it to back up my entire user folder - nearly 40G worth of data - and just dragged and dropped the user folder onto the interface screen, then pressed the big RED button on the bottom right of the screen. It ran and asked for discs when needed. It's like backing up to hard disc by dragging and dropping files, except you just remove and insert DVDs when prompted.

Here's a sample of the interface screen; note all of the status data at the bottom left and very bottom of the screen, including how many discs are needed and how much space will be remaining on the last DVD:



If you need to retrieve the files you've backed up, Roxio Restore allows you to easily restore an individual file or folder, or the entire disc set. All you have to do to restore your files is:

1. Insert any disc from the set into your computer.
2. The Roxio Restore application is on each disc.
3. Open the Roxio Restore application.
4. You will see a directory of every folder and file in the disc set—in the same order and hierarchy as they were when you recorded the discs.
5. Browse to the file or folder you want to restore, select the item and click Restore.
6. If the desired file or folder is not on the current disc, Roxio Restore prompts you to insert the correct disc. You can also restore the entire disc set.

More Pros

Here's a sample of the many other capabilities available with this software:

- Toast has its own browser that can be used to preview files. If you have Leopard (Mac OS X 10.5), the Leopard "Quick Look" function can be used to preview media and text files, PDF documents, and Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint documents—all within Toast.
- Media capabilities include burning HD-DVD data discs, creating Blu-Ray and HD-DVD video discs, editing TiVo recordings, TiVoToGo support, and DVD compression.
- Create photo albums and slide shows that are cross-platform.
- Copy data or movie DVDs to be cross-platform.
- Allows you to pause then restart during burning sessions (but I don't recommend this - see cons).
- Allows recording of streaming video and internet audio burns.
- Conversion to many video formats, especially for iPhones, iPods, etc. For example, an HD video that was created for your computer is probably too large for your iPod, iPhone, or other portable device. But Toast can convert to the appropriate format. You can also export profiles to formats such as Apple TV to Xbox 360 to BlackBerry, so even if you don't know which format works best, you just have to know what type of device you'll be using. A 16-second preview of what the converted video will look like is also available.
- Ability to encrypt files.
- Make a Mac volume disc: This type of disc can be used only on a Macintosh computer and requires a valid volume file as a data source. You can use Mac Volume to copy an entire volume (hard disc, partition, etc.) to a disc exactly as it is. This was in the user manual - I haven't actually tried this function.
- Can create almost any kind of audio disc. Didn't find one it doesn't make, but I can't swear to this.
- Camcorder support: Automatically import video from your DV camcorder using the Plug & Burn feature. You can import the entire tape or only a portion of the tape. Lets you add/splice in other video or slideshows from your hard disc before recording.

Here's some other features that were listed in an on-line article that I am not familiar with, included for those who may be interested.

- With an add-in package, it allows burning of Blu-Ray DVDs if you have the proper equipment. Since I don't have that equipment or the plug-in, I wasn't able to try out this feature.
- Toast now lets you edit video and television programs you've recorded and transferred from your TiVo. (Toast 9 also supports Elgato's EyeTV television-tuner devices.) This allows you to trim out commercials or other unnecessary footage without using another piece of software. It's especially handy for making on-the-fly edits before you commit to disc.
- Besides its video prowess, Toast also has handy features for those who work with audio. CD Spin Doctor 5 helps you create digital copies of analog recordings from LPs and cassettes or streaming audio from the Internet, from equipment setup to audio fingerprinting that helps you identify tracks.

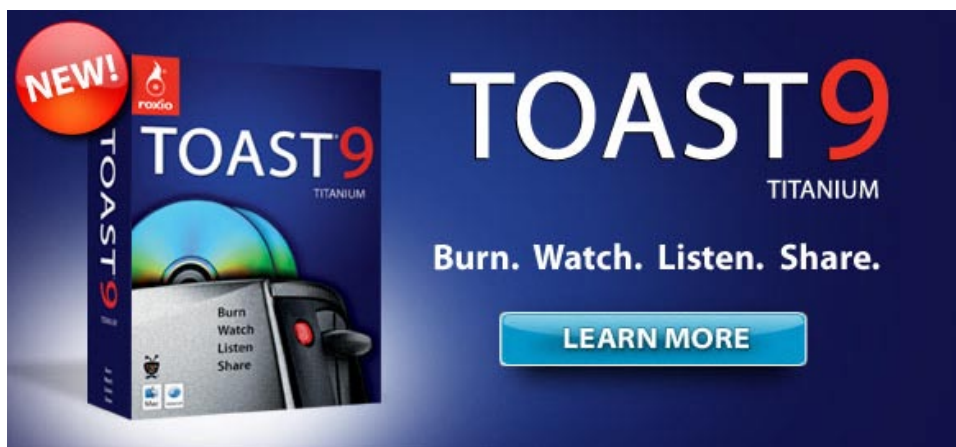
Cons

I guess I had to find some negatives as part of this review. These were the only ones I could come up with:

- Can't be used on older systems. Requires minimum system of Mac 10.4 (Tiger) with an Intel system; I used it with both Tiger and Leopard systems.
- Sometimes gets hung up in conversion and backup processes - don't try to do anything else at the same time or it will lock up.
- You cannot make a bootable Mac volume disc.

For more info, visit Roxio's website at <http://www.roxio.com> or call at 1-866-434-9871.

(Editor's Note: Okay, that does it. Now I really gotta get that new MacBook....)



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Doctor Mac

by Greg Patt

Dear Doctor Mac,

Of course I have a backup system for all of my important rocket files at work but I was wondering, shouldn't I have a backup system for my home computers too? What do you recommend?

***Signed
Nowhere to backup to.***

Dear Nowhere,

My dear old Italian grandmother used to say, "It isn't a question of IF your hard drive is going to crash, it is only a question of WHEN!" I have to admit it has happened to me several times and did I take grandma Mancini's advice and back up my drives? Uh-uh.

But I do now have a system at home now.

The way I see it, you have three choices, use an older, retired Mac to act as a server of sorts on your network. Get it a new, bigger hard drive and turn on file sharing. It is better than making it into a fish tank as long as it still works!

The second choice is good if you have only one machine to backup. The new USB external hard drives like LaCie's new Terabyte drive for \$149 is inexpensive, big and reliable. Plug this into the back of your desktop machine (Use Leopard's Time Machine if you have it, free ones like Silver Keeper if you don't) and you are good to go!

The third choice, the one I use is good if you have a network and multiple machines. The solution is a networked attached storage or NAS. This is essentially a hard drive with an Ethernet network port. You just plug it into your router or hub and voila, it acts like a server. Mine, a 250GB Simple Tech Share NAS even has a USB port to plug in either a printer and make it a network printer or another drive if I want to double up my storage. The down side is it can be slower than an attached drive.

As referenced before, I use LACie's Silverkeeper, a free backup software to do a scheduled backup every night. Silverkeeper is simple, easy to use and of course free. There are other options such as Retrospect, but I don't think they ever read Apple's user interface book, I find it complex to use. I am just starting to use Leopard's Time Machine, so I don't have an opinion on it yet. But I will, I have an opinion on everything.

As a side note, when doing the research as to what NAS device to use, I discovered a strange quirk in Apple's file sharing protocol (AFP). I was copying files from my hard drive over the network to another drive, using Apple's file sharing. I kept getting error messages that it could not copy files with long names or files bigger than 2GB. Dr. Mac was confused! If they were OK on my hard rive, why weren't they OK on that hard drive over there? Then I discovered Apple File Protocol, the basis for file transfer on a network. The version I was using was 2.x something (There is a prize from Dr. Mac to anybody out there that can tell me how to determine what version of AFP you are running on any given machine. I've already stumped two Mac Geniuses at the Apple store). Later version of OS from Tiger on solved this problem with version 3.2 of AFP but it was frustrating!

So go forth and back up, nowhere man.

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I am as mad as Hell

by Greg Patt

I am as mad as Hell and I don't want to take it anymore!

Anybody that knows me knows I am a Mac person through and through. Like the original Apple logo, my blood was rainbow colored. When the logo turned white, so did mine.

I am getting tired...sick and tired of making excuses for what I still believe, or THOUGHT I believed to be a superior OS! I am tired of waiting for a beach ball to stop spinning when there is only one or two programs open on a laptop that is maxed out on memory at 2GB of RAM.

I am getting tired of doing program force quits...over and over. I tell people I work my machine hard but come on, I EXPECT it to work hard. I never ask it to do any two million instructions per second that I wouldn't do!

I am tired of advising people to switch from Windoze and buy the best, most easy to use machine on the planet and then two days after they bought it, running nothing but email, tell them how to do a force quit and a forced restart!

I am tired of buying software from one of the biggest software vendors, Adobe, and going to the help menu, typing in a command like "Document Fonts" a feature specific to Acrobat and getting no references to Acrobat functions but 3-4 Apple Finder references. If I wanted my Finder questions answered, I would have asked Finder not Acrobat!

I am tired of waiting a minute and a half for a cold startup. In my opinion it should be 3-4 seconds, but I would settle for 30...for now. If this was rocket science, maybe you guys could help them out?!

I will continue to use my two Macs day in and day out for up to 10 hours a day, but dammit, I am as mad as Hell, and just tired of having to take it!

Editor's Note: Okay, maybe Greg should buy the new Macbook??



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Apple Time Machine—A User Report

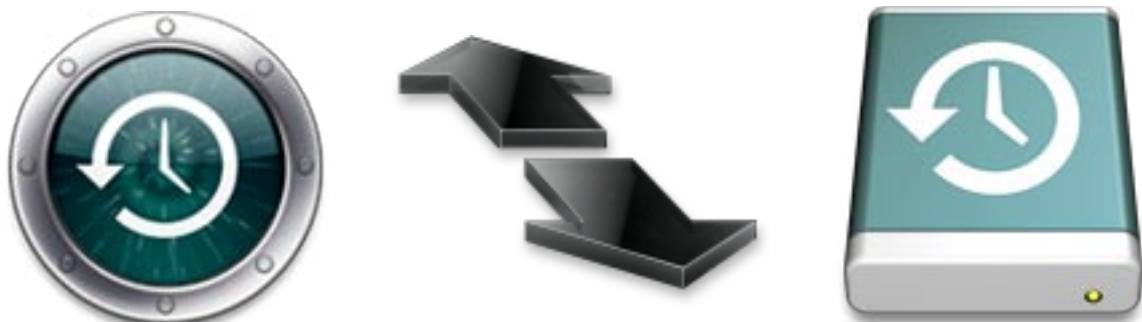
by Steve Lilley

Background: I became a workplace Mac user this year when hiring on as a Civil Service person and being asked, ‘what kind of computer do you want?’ This was the first time I ever had an offer to use a Mac at work (my wife and I got an iMac G5 for Christmas in 2005) and I eagerly applied for a Macbook Pro, never believing my luck until it actually arrived with Leopard installed. I’m still discovering its amazing capabilities. I’d like to share my experience setting up and using the Time Machine data backup capability in Leopard.

Setup: I purchased (through my office, the NASA Safety Center) an Iomega 120GB external hard drive and hooked it up to the Macbook docking station. Then I used onscreen Mac Help and searched for ‘Time Machine’ -- ‘To Set Up or Adjust Time Machine,’ and followed the directions. I was ready to start backing up data in less than a minute. I decided to do the first backup at the end of the workday because the directions advised this. Thus, I don’t know how long it took to back up my paltry 40GB of data on my hard drive. But when I came in the next day and saw a new “Time Machine Backups” icon on my Desktop, I clicked it...and ...COOL! The screen dissolved into a graphic representation of my files, not just in their current versions, but every hourly backup version too, stretching into a galactic spiral background. I found it very easy to locate a backup file. I also liked that I had all my backups at my desk. If I want to take them somewhere, I can do so. I suppose it would be good to keep backups outside the building as well, but I handle data that is not allowed to be stored on a network.

Operation: About two weeks later, I could not find a file I thought I had saved to my hard drive (and the Spotlight function is an unsurpassed search tool for this). It was only found on my Time Machine backup. I was very thankful I had it there.

Overall: Time Machine has used about 61GB to back up my 40GB hard drive since I set it up two months ago. This amount of memory used seems to be increasing more at the rate that I create new files than the rate that Time Machine creates backups, which is good (at first I was afraid I was going to need a larger external drive). I’m really happy with Time Machine.



The opinions expressed in this review are those of the author and do not imply the endorsement of NASA.

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By J.D. Biersdorfer, David Pogue

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ISBN 13: 9780596522124

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Microsoft Entourage Tip

Thanks to Dennie Gonia and Rafael Sanabria for this great Entourage email tip!!

If you are starting to get a huge list of outdated email addresses in the list to auto fill when you start typing an email address, here is the way to prune that down.

Click on the address book inside of Entourage and go to Contacts. This is the address book on your computer.

Go thru this long list and highlight the emails and names that are no longer valid and delete. Next time you open a new message, these outdated addresses will not appear when you start to type.



New iPod Nanos Available Now!!

New iPods and new colors! Just in time for this year's holiday season, Apple has announced a second generation iPod touch, an all-new iPod nano product line in 9 brilliant colors as well as updated iPod shuffle colors. All new iPod models are available today on your EPP online store with free engraving and free shipping.

The second-generation iPod touch features a new super-thin contoured stainless steel design, a 3.5-inch widescreen glass display, Wi-Fi wireless networking, integrated volume control buttons, a built-in speaker for casual listening, a built-in accelerometer and other advanced sensors and Apple's revolutionary multi-touch user interface. The iPod touch is available in 8GB, 16GB and 32GB. Now all models are even more affordable!

The iPod nano product line now features a curved aluminum and glass enclosure that comes in 9 different colors--silver, purple, black, blue, green, orange, yellow, pink and red. You can pick your favorite color iPod nano in either an 8GB or 16GB. The new nano features an accelerometer that allow users to rotate the iPod to view Cover Flow, photos and videos in full screen.

Lastly, the iPod shuffle is now available in four new vibrant colors in addition to the silver-blue, green, pink and red. The features of the shuffle remain the same, including the low starting EPP price of \$46.00 for the 1GB model and \$65.00 for the 2GB model.

Again, all new iPod models are available today on your EPP online store with free engraving and free shipping. Don't forget, you can order for yourself or on behalf of friends and family!

EPP store: <http://www.apple.com/eppstore/nasa>

Please communicate this wonderful news to your employees. Attached is the PDF to help you communicate the news and post on your employee portal.

As always, thank you so much for your continued support in bringing awareness to the Apple EPP.

Kind regards,

Brian

Brian Connelly
North America EPP
Government



Strengths and Weaknesses of Time Machine

*by Claire J Rottenberg
CJRTOOLS ebooks*

Like many other Mac OS X 10.5 (Leopard) users, I use Time Machine for backing up data. As good as Time Machine is, however, it is not perfect and probably should not be the only backup option you use. In this article, I describe some of the strengths and weaknesses of Time Machine and offer suggestions for other backup options that can be used to supplement Time Machine.

Strengths of Time Machine

Time Machine's greatest strength is probably its automatic functioning. Once you've set up Time Machine, you can forget about it because Time Machine will automatically back up your files every hour. It works quietly in the background so you don't need to stop working on your computer while Time Machine is backing up your files.

Another advantage of Time Machine is that backups are cumulative and incremental. Once an initial backup is completed, Time Machine will back up only new or changed files so subsequent backups are quicker and take up less storage space than the original backup. In addition, Time Machine will keep making incremental backups until you run out of disk space on the backup drive. In other words, your backup drive can contain several months worth of files before some files need to be deleted. This can be a particularly useful feature for certain backup tasks, such as saving archived files of business or financial data.

Time Machine's restore feature for individual files and folders is one of its greatest strengths. Time Machine lets you search for files by location and date or by using Spotlight. Once you've found the file you want, you only need to click a button to restore it.

A final positive aspect of Time Machine is that you can back up files from multiple drives or partitions to the same backup drive. This is an especially useful feature if you partition your drive or if you have several drives attached to your computer.

Weaknesses of Time Machine

Although Time Machine has some excellent features, it doesn't let you create a bootable clone of your hard drive. If your drive dies or the system becomes corrupted, the process to restore your system with Time Machine can be long and complicated, especially compared to the ease of restoring with a cloning application, such as SuperDuper! If you're backing up your entire drive with Time Machine, to restore the system, you have to boot into the Mac OS X Install disk and wait while your entire system is restored. If your hard drive has died, you are without a working system until you replace the drive. In contrast, with a cloned drive, you can boot into the backup drive and start working with it immediately.

Another downside of Time Machine is that the initial setup for Time Machine can be confusing and time-consuming. Instead of selecting files to include in a backup, which would clearly be the most logical way to set up backup files, with Time Machine you have to select the files to exclude from a backup.

Another weakness of Time Machine is that, over time, your backup files can consume huge amounts of storage space so you will probably need a large drive for your Time Machine backups. With the difficult financial problems many people are facing today, the cost of purchasing a large extra hard drive just for Time Machine can put a strain on an already limited budget.

A final weakness of Time Machine is that you can't back up files to CDs or DVDs. Since it's always a good idea to have off-site backups of critical data, it would be good if this feature were built into Time Machine.

Programs to Supplement Time Machine

There are several excellent free or low-cost backup programs you can download, as well as some Apple programs you might already own, to add backup features missing in Time Machine.

The first type of backup application you should have in addition to Time Machine is a cloning program. This type of program will let you create an exact copy of your main drive and, in an emergency, you can immediately boot into the clone and start working with it. Two excellent cloning programs are **Carbon Copy Cloner** (<http://www.bombich.com/software/ccc.html>) and **SuperDuper!** (<http://www.shirt-pocket.com/SuperDuper>). CCC is donationware and you can view some tutorials for using it on my Leopard Tips website (homepage.mac.com/cjrtools/mac-leopard-tips/leopard-tutorials/leopard-video-tutorials.html). **SuperDuper!** is free for basic cloning, but for more advanced features, such as incremental cloning, you need to pay a small shareware fee (\$27.95).

If you are a MobileMe subscriber, Apple has provided you with **Backup**, an application that lets you back up files to your iDisk, a hard drive, or CDs or DVDs. With Backup, you may create custom, scheduled backups so, as with Time Machine, the backups may occur while you're working on other tasks.

If you use iTunes and iPhoto, those applications have built-in backup features that let you easily save your valuable music and photo collections to CDs or DVDs. A free alternative to iPhoto, Kodak EasyShare (<http://www.kodak.com>), comes with a built-in backup update feature that lets you know when you should back up your photo library to a CD or DVD.

Conclusion

Time Machine is an excellent, unique backup option, but it is missing features that can be easily supplemented with free Apple and third-party alternatives. So, even if you use Time Machine, you should consider adding a cloning program and applications for saving valuable data to CDs or DVDs.

Claire J Rottenberg is the author of Easy Guides to Mac OS X software (Safari, Mail, System Preferences, TextEdit) and Course Books on Mac OS X 10.5, iPhoto '08, iTunes, and Mac OS X 10.4. More information on her books is available on the CJRTOOLS ebooks website (<http://www.cjrtools.com/ebooks>) . Members of Apple user groups can receive a 25% discount on all purchases from CJRTOOLS ebooks by using the Apple User Group program code, mug2008. This special discount offer is valid through November, 2008 and more information on the offer can be found on the Apple User Group Offers web page (homepage.mac.com/ugab/offers.html).

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